

VZCZCXRO0749
RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW
DE RUEHCG #0053 0550648
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 240648Z FEB 09
FM AMCONSUL CHENNAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2093
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3504
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS CHENNAI 000053

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: MAOISTS SUFFER FURTHER BLOW IN ANDHRA PRADESH

REF: A) 2008 CHENNAI 379; B) 2008 CHENNAI 110

1. (SBU) Konapuri Ilaiah, former Secretary of the Andhra Pradesh State Committee (APSC) of India's indigenous Maoist insurgency (also known as Naxalites), surrendered to police on February 15, allegedly because of his ill health. Deputy Inspector General of the Special Intelligence Branch B. Shivdhar Reddy told us that Ilaiah, who served as APSC Secretary from 2006-07, had been underground for 17 years. He also told us that Ilaiah was recently demoted by the Maoist leadership and told to move to Dandakaranya, a dense forest region covering 80,000 square kilometers in northern Andhra Pradesh extending into Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

2. (SBU) Srinivas Reddy, Hyderabad Bureau Chief of The Hindu (one of India's leading dailies), told us that the police have eliminated almost all Maoist activity in Telangana, the primarily rural region of northern Andhra Pradesh. Telangana once pioneered the Maoist revolutionary movement in India -- communist revolutionary and current Nepali Prime Minister Prachanda visited Telangana's Nizamabad in 1996 to study the movement before launching the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. Now, however, Telangana is no longer a center of Maoist activity, as the Maoists have moved to the bordering states of Chhattisgarh and Orissa. According to Srinivas, "Maoists cadres based in Chhattisgarh and Orissa look down upon the comrades in Telangana for their weakening position." He also speculated that this humiliation may have precipitated Ilaiah's decision to surrender.

3. (SBU) Ilaiah's surrender follows the October 2008 killing of two APSC members (ref A) at the hands of the police. Those killings helped boost police morale after the June 2008 ambush that resulted in the biggest ever loss of life for the state's elite Greyhounds anti-Maoist unit (ref B). Ilaiah's surrender is part of an apparently increasingly common occurrence -- according to police contacts, 208 Maoists surrendered in 2008. Andhra Pradesh police admit, however, that the Maoists are still present in three of the state's districts (Visakhapatnam, Khammam, and East Godavari), while maintaining that the Maoists' small numbers limit their ability to do more than conduct isolated attacks. Shivdhar Reddy told us that although the Maoists may try to launch attacks in the run up to state and national elections in the coming months, the surrender of Ilaiah, "an expert in military action, was certainly a major loss" for the Maoists.

KAPLAN